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HERE BEGINNETH THE TALE OF CANTERBURY
AND FIRST THE PROLOGUE THEREOF



THAT Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote.
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne

Nath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne.
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye.
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were
seke.

BIFIL that in that season on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as
I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrym-
age
To Caunterbury with ful devout
corage,
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde

*Reduction of First Page of Chaucer (Kelmscott Edition).
Illustration
by
Edward Burne Jones,
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by
William Morris.*